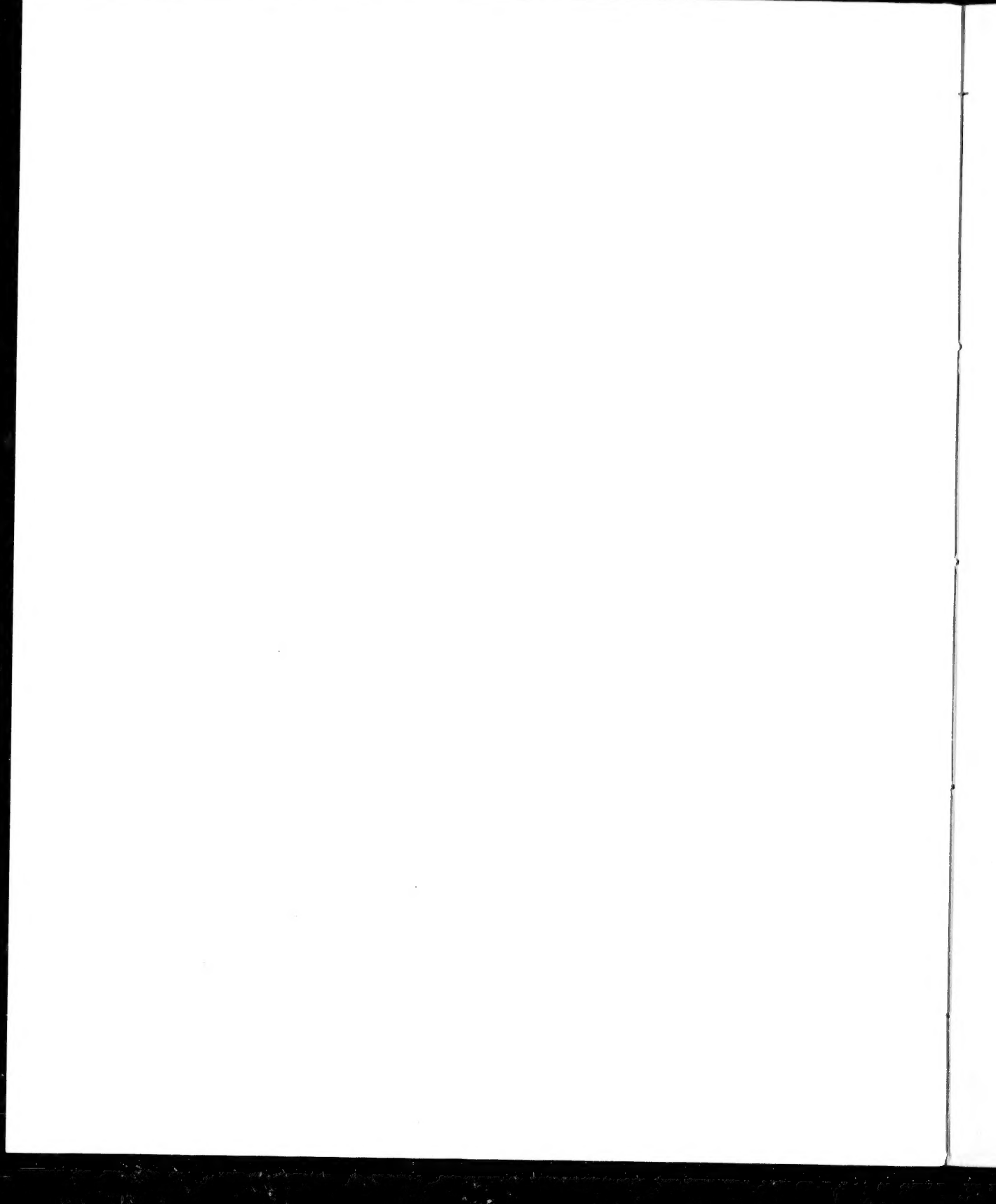




House of Commons Debates

FOURTH SESSION, FIFTH PARLIAMENT.--49 VIC.

SPEECH OF SIR ADOLPHE CARON, M.P., ON THE EXECUTION OF LOUIS RIEL.

OTTAWA, MARCH 17TH AND 18TH, 1886.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON, Mr. Speaker: Last night, at an hour far advanced, I moved the adjournment of this debate. For several days the time of this House has been occupied in the discussion of this most important subject, and I must say that I hail with pleasure the opportunity which is furnished me to-day of submitting to Parliament and to the country the view which I have taken from the beginning of the now historical Riel question, and the reasons which actuated me in the conduct which I considered it my duty to take in reference to it. Of all the charges that can be levelled against a public man, of all the grave accusations which can be brought against a public man in the discharge of his official duties, I think the most infamous is that of being a traitor to his country, a traitor to his people. For weeks, nay, for months, my hon. colleagues and myself have been traduced before public opinion in our Province. We have been accused of being traitors to our blood and traitors to our Province. Sir, I wish to ask to-day how came it that we could have laid ourselves open to such a grave charge. I want to know how it is possible that men, who for years and years have enjoyed the confidence of their countrymen, of the friends who support us in Parliament, should have rendered themselves guilty of the charge which has been brought against us. Sir, under circumstances of extreme difficulty, knowing as we did know, and as it was our duty to know, what public opinion was in the Province of Quebec in regard to this question, we have been charged with being traitors to our people and our Province, because we allowed the law to take its course. We did so because we considered it our duty not to interfere with the carrying out of the sentence against Louis Riel. Mr. Speaker, I consider it my duty; I consider, moreover, that I would not be displaying that courage which every public man should possess in the performance of the duties entrusted to him, if I were not to state, from my place, to Parliament and the country, that if similar circumstances should arise again to those which took place last year, I should do exactly as I did on that occasion. I do not wish, Sir, to be misunderstood. I felt, and I feel to-day, more than I can express, how painful was the duty which we were called upon to perform. I felt that it was not a light thing to sever those ties, political and social, which had bound me to those friends and countrymen who had entrusted me with their confidence and who withdrew it on that occasion. But I felt that it was my imperative duty to my own Province of Quebec, which I love so much, to take the course

I did; and I say again, notwithstanding what hon. gentlemen opposite may say, that if the same circumstances should arise again, I would do exactly as I did before. Sir, I am glad to be able to say that since this debate commenced it has, with few exceptions, been conducted in a manner befitting the gravity of the question under discussion, and in a manner of which we have no reason to be ashamed. In doing my little share in this discussion, and in the presentation of my views, I hope I shall be able to follow that which has already been set by several hon. gentlemen, and that I shall do so without injuring the feelings of those who differ with me. Sir, I think I am expressing the opinion of all my friends, which opinion has already been expressed by my hon. colleague the Minister of Interior, in saying that we all feel proud in having as a member of this House, the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier), in view of the speech which he made last night. It was a speech of which I believe I am safe in saying any Parliament could be proud, and in discussing the question which to him, coming from the Province of Quebec, as to me coming from the same Province, is one certainly which must have appealed to his feelings, as he showed it did during the delivery of that speech.—I say, he has conducted the discussion in such a way as I hope will have a beneficial effect on the whole debate. I have said that I considered it was my bounden duty to my country, to my Province, to act as I have acted as an adviser of the Crown. Mr. Speaker, as Ministers of the Crown, occupying, as we do, the Treasury benches, we are here representing, not one individual Province but the whole Dominion of Canada. I deemed it was an obligation for us, occupying those positions, to maintain the peace and order in the Dominion. I considered it our duty to maintain the credit of this country at home and abroad. I considered that was our duty as Ministers of the Crown, responsible for the peace of the citizens inhabiting this country. I say more. We know, from the public documents of this Parliament, how much treasure Canada has been investing for the purpose of bringing to our vast and fertile prairies of the west, the population of the overcrowded centres of Europe. It is necessary, if we are to hold out inducements to immigrants to come to Canada and to settle in happy homes in our country, to show that Canada can protect those who entrust their future to her care. It is necessary for us to show that, whether in the extreme North-West or in the older Provinces, the Government of Canada is sufficiently strong to protect her people and to maintain law and order. It was important from

that standpoint that there should be no uncertain sound about the action of the Government. It was important that it should be known abroad, in the old country and all over Canada that the Dominion was strong enough, vast as are her territories, to maintain, as I have stated, law and order in every portion of her domains. We have, moreover,—and this is a most important feature, as I understand it, in the present debate—thousands of an Indian population in the North-West. I believe every man who desires to see Canada advancing and prosperous must feel that, having acquired those territories which formerly were the uncontested homes of the Indians, we should be true and loyal to those whom we have taken under our protection. We have a large number of Indians in that territory who have a right to expect that they shall be loyally and kindly treated, that the treaties into which they have entered with the Government shall be scrupulously carried out; but it is of the greatest importance that they should also learn that peace and order must be maintained in those territories. It is of the greatest importance that they should understand that whatever grounds there may be for agitation, there is a constitutional way of agitating. A constitutional agitation will always achieve results much more satisfactory than those secured by violence; and I say, therefore, that, whatever the complaint may be, the people of Canada should understand that they can only agitate in a constitutional way without appealing to force, violence and arms. Under those circumstances we felt that it was of the utmost necessity that we should allow the law of the land to take its course in the case of Louis Riel, and not to interfere with the carrying out of the sentence which had been passed. It would be useless for me, after the speeches which have already been delivered, to enter into the question of the origin of the Riel risings in the North-West. We all know the circumstances which led to the first rising. We know that Louis Riel, in 1870, organised a rebellion in the North-West; and it must be remembered that when the case which is now under review by this Parliament, is dealt with, that the second revolt and trouble which took place was also the work of the man who had originated and perpetrated the first. By organising these two revolts among the half-breeds, whom he so shamefully deceived, and which, for a moment, threatened to call into play all the Indian population of the North-West, it cannot be denied that Riel rendered himself guilty of one of the most heinous crimes of which a man in any country can be guilty. I consider that he deceived his people, that he tried to sell them and to carry out blackmail by consenting that if money were given to him by the Government, he would give up their cause, would retire and allow them to fall back upon their own resources. In doing this, I think he is not deserving of the sympathy of men who wish to go into this question calmly and dispassionately, who consider it from the standpoint of the interests of the country, from the standpoint merely of a duty which had to be performed by those who occupied responsible positions as advisers of the Crown. When we consider, reading as we have read, the history of these Indian wars, what might have been their result if these Indian tribes, who fortunately kept quiet to a very great extent, and who, if they did keep quiet, did not do so because Riel had not endeavored in every possible way to get them to help him in fighting the Government of his country—who, after considering what might have been the consequences of an Indian war, can for a moment have any sympathy with the movement which had been inaugurated by Riel? We know perfectly well that at the very beginning of the outbreak, when he had succeeded by his machinations in getting the Metis to withdraw their allegiance and their confidence from their clergy, from the missionaries who during so many years had been laboring so disinterestedly in the interests of the Metis nation—

when we come to consider that at the beginning of the outbreak the first victims of Louis Riel and of his agitation were the two missionaries, Father Marchand and Father Fafard, I ask myself how it is possible to afford to Louis Riel the sympathy which in some quarters it has been attempted to make believe existed. When all the circumstances of this outbreak are fully gone into, when we come to consider the manner in which it was prepared and organised, when we come to consider the number of lives which it has cost the Dominion, the treasure that has been expended during the revolt, I say it was time for us to consider whether the most energetic possible means should not be taken to prevent the recurrence in the future of any such troubles as we had in the North-West. But, Sir, I hope that within the precincts of this Parliament we shall not find any hon. gentleman who will say that, in allowing the law to take its course, in not interfering with the execution of the sentence legally passed on Louis Riel the Government has sacrificed a martyr and a hero. I do not see how this is possible, although I have been reading, for the last several months, articles in newspapers which would really indicate that some of those who edited or wrote them must have considered that this man was a great hero and great martyr. I ask myself, reading the evidence which has been taken in his case, knowing the circumstances which attended the rising, knowing everything he did for the purpose of getting up the troubles in the North-West; I ask myself how it is possible that any person having at heart the interests of his country, should consider that the example of Louis Riel is one which should be held out to the admiration of the people of any country, or that he should be considered a hero and a martyr. Is he not the man who stirred up an Indian war with all its horrors? Is he not the man who wrote to Major Crozier that he wanted to commence without delay a war of extermination; and, Sir, upon that one point, I should like to read a very short extract from the evidence which has been taken during the trial and published in a pamphlet by the Government. At page 168 there is this letter which he addressed to Major Crozier:

"ST. ANTONY, March 21st, 1885.

"To Major Crozier,
"Commandant of the Police Force at Carlton and Battleford.
"MAJORS.—The Councillors of the Provisional Government of the Saskatchewan have the honor to communicate to you the following conditions of surrender: you will be required to give up completely the situation which the Canadian Government have placed you in, at Carlton and Battleford, together with all Government properties.
"In case of acceptance, you and your men will be set free on your parole of honor to keep the peace; and those who will choose to leave the country will be furnished with teams and provisions to reach Qu'Appelle.
"In case of non-acceptance, we intend to attack you when to-morrow (the Lord's Day) is over, and to commence without delay a war of extermination upon all those who have shown themselves hostile to our rights.
"Messrs. Charles and Maxime Lépine are the gentlemen with whom you will have to treat.
"Major, we respect you. Let the cause of humanity be a consolation to you for the reverses which the Government's misconduct has brought upon you.

LOUIS DAVID RIEL,
Ex oves.

"RÉMI PARENTAUX, Chairman.	JEAN BAPTISTE PARENTAUX.
"CHARLES NOLAN.	PENNER HENRY.
"GABRIEL DUMONT.	ALBERT DELORME.
"MOISE OUELLETTE.	DAM. OABRIÈRE.
"ALBERT MONKMAN.	MAXIME LÉPINE.
"BAPTISTE ROYER.	BAPTISTE BOUCHER.
"DONALD ROBIN.	DAVID TOUCHARD.
"AMABLE JOBIN.	

PH. CARNOT, Secretary."

Here, Mr. Speaker, is this man who is held up as a hero, writing this letter wherein he states that his object is to get up a war of extermination. Can the signification of this letter be misunderstood? Can it be contended that that man, being carried away by his devotion to his people, wanted merely to agitate for the purpose of having rendered

to them the justice which he had tried to get for them, when we see among the papers which have been produced, forming part of the evidence which has been taken in that case, that his object was to get up in the North-West a war of extermination? It was his purpose to get up a war the most horrible of all wars, an Indian war; and more especially so, among a population like that of the North-West which is so widely scattered over that country, not living together compactly like the population of the older Provinces of the Dominion, but where the settlers are living at considerable distances from each other, and where it is almost impossible for them to give help or succor to each other. It was under these circumstances that he intended, as is established by his own letter, by evidence which cannot be controverted, that he intended, as he states here, to get up a war of extermination. He took all the means that were at his disposal to get up such a war; he tried everything in his power to make his nefarious project a successful one; he used every means he could to get up a war which, so far as it went, had the most disastrous results for Canada, and which, if it had been complicated by an outbreak of the Indian population, would have been more terrible and more disastrous still.

It being six o'clock, the House adjourned.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, when the House adjourned, I was expressing the hope that within the precincts of this Chamber no hon. member would be found who, upon his responsibility, would say, as I read in some newspapers, that Riel was a hero, and that the Government had allowed him to be sacrificed and to be made a martyr. In the course of my remarks I read a letter which was addressed by Riel to Major Crozier, to show what kind of a hero Riel was—a letter in which he was expressing his determination to carry on a war of extermination. I shall to-day, Sir, supplement the information which that letter conveyed to us by reading another which Riel addressed to Poundmaker, and which proceeds to say:

"Since we wrote to you, important things have occurred. The police attacked us. We met them. God has given us a victory. Thirty half-breeds and five Crees stood the fight against one hundred and twenty men. After fighting during thirty-eight or forty minutes the enemy took flight.

"Bless God with us for the success that he has had the charity to give us. Rise up. Face the police. If possible, if it is not done yet, take Fort Battle. Destroy it. Save all the provisions and goods, and come and join us. You are in sufficient numbers to send us a detachment forty or fifty strong.

"All that you do, do it for the sake of God Almighty, under the keeping of Jesus Christ, the Holy Virgin, St. Joseph and St. Jean Baptiste.

"(Signed) LOUIS DAVID RIEL, *Excoedé*."

This letter shows what kind of a hero Louis David Riel was. Now, Sir, with your permission I shall read a letter which was addressed to me some time ago by His Grace Archbishop Grandin, and which I now read to the House with his permission. The letter is dated the 12th of July, 1885. To avoid reading the original and translating it before the House, I have translated it myself, and I shall read to the House the translation I made. The original, however, is here, and can be given to *Hansard*; but so as not to inflict upon the House the reading of the letter in French and English, I thought it might be more convenient and more acceptable to the members if I read from the translation:

"HONORABLE AND DEAR SIR,—Assuredly the troubles in the North-West did not fail to worry you a great deal, and it seems to me that Your Honor must breathe more freely now that they are subdued. I fully share your satisfaction. However, I must add that, as to me, it is far from being complete. The rebellion has particularly wounded my heart; I have suffered when I saw our good half-breeds—deceived and terrorised by a miserable maniac—despise our advice, mistrust our devotion, declare against the Government, against the Church and against God. Above all, I have been painfully affected when, at the voice of that sort of possessed man, I saw the Indians rise and go to the extent of murdering persons who had never done them any wrong, who had never done them ought but kindness—persons who, like our dear missionaries, had sacrificed for them their very existence.

"The murders, the almost entire destruction of our settlements, the absolutely complete destruction of many others, the poverty, the uneasiness, the anguish of mind, the fear, the discouragement among the vanquished, the hatred and despair among many—this, above all, is what frightens me and causes me almost to forget my personal disasters. No doubt every one suffers more or less from this uneasiness and these sad forebodings; but it seems to me that I suffer therefrom more than any one."

Here is another extract from that letter, which I beg also to read:

"I forward to the Minister of Justice a petition in favor of the half-breeds compromised in this lamentable rebellion, not that I approved of it, for from this, but I positively know that these poor rebels have been shamefully deceived; their simplicity was prevailed upon, they were made to take up arms almost without being aware of it. A wretched man had carried their confidence by holding himself up as one Divine. They were convinced that he enjoyed a power almost Godly, they feared his anger and his threats; had his hand held the thunderbolt, they would not have dreaded him more. He did not reach this of a sudden. He has turned everything to his advantage, his former popularity, his reputation, the affection and the confidence his countrymen had for him, their truly religious and sometimes superstitious spirit, and, above all, their grievances against the Government. Well aware that in order to master them he absolutely needed the help of religion, he at first tried to secure the help of the clergy, whilst he was attempting to incense the half-breeds against the Government. It was but too easy for him to succeed upon the latter point, but he failed with the priests. To obviate this loss, he labored a long time to earn from his countrymen the reputation of being a saint, and a great saint. He spent in prayers both days and nights. He would fast often and told everyone that his was a truly Divine mission. He wound up by giving himself as a man of God, and from that moment there was nothing but to follow him. Enjoying a Divine authority, he was superior to the clergy and to all religions; these words were always in his mouth, 'the will of God must be done.' Many of his countrymen were frightened at his excesses; as the priests had done, they wished to resist him; in the debates, he would conquer them with abuse, lies and threats; he caused them to be imprisoned, and even condemned them to death. Understanding that it was impossible to resist him, many took refuge either in Prince Albert or in the bush. When they returned they found themselves ruined as well as the others. So it is, honorable and dear Sir, that the greater part of the prisoners at Regina are victims specially of terrorism. They are more stupid than guilty, and, therefore, I claim indulgence towards them. When I asked this favor, I can say that I would be borne up by all reasonable persons in the country, of all nationalities and of all religious denominations."

The Bishop goes on to speak of the councillors who also were prisoners at Regina:

"As regards the councillors of this new Mahdi, how can they be justified. Alas! dear Sir, these poor people have positively been chosen on account of their ignorance and of their timorousness; in the meetings they dared not open their mouths, resolutions were passed in their names when they did not even know what was the matter. To-day terror reigns amongst all the half-breeds of the district, nay, through all the nations, although they praise the noble conduct of General Middleton, who—said to me poor mothers and the missionaries—acted more like a father than as a conqueror."

These letters go to show what kind of a man Riel was. It is almost impossible, the more one goes into the history of this rebellion, the more one reads the documents and papers relating to it, to understand how even an attempt could be made to convert Riel into a hero. Not only have we got these letters which I have read, but we have got letters which I will not read, because they have been already submitted to the House, from Fathers André, Moulin, Vegreville, Leacock, and Frère Piquet, who state positively that the rebellion was entirely the work of Louis Riel, and that he was perfectly sane. We have got, if it were necessary to complete the testimony adduced, evidence to show the disastrous plans entertained by Riel, and to show that he was perfectly capable, from the state of his mind, of carrying out his nefarious schemes. His own writing which he published, his last will and testament, his letters to his mother and to his wife, his farewell letters, his retraction of his religious errors—all these go to show that he was really in a sane state of mind and perfectly accountable for the acts of which he was found guilty. We have also evidence to show what his intentions were, for he tried to induce the Indians to join in his rebellion, and we have an interview, which was published in the newspapers, establishing beyond the possibility of doubt

that he had tried to induce Crowfoot, one of the leaders of Indians, to rise in rebellion. We have undoubted proof that he tried to kindle an Indian war in 1879-80; we have also the evidence of Father André, which establishes beyond the possibility of discussion, that the motives of Riel in the agitation were interested, personal motives, and that he stated he was perfectly prepared to give up the Metis cause provided his claims against the Government were satisfied. We have, further, the very important piece of evidence, to my mind, that on the 2nd February, two months before the outbreak, Sir John sent a despatch to Nolin, which was communicated to Father André and to Riel, about the settlement of Metis matters. In this despatch there was no mention of indemnity to Riel, who, in consequence of this, decided to take up arms. We have all this evidence, which cannot be controverted, to show how far this man was deserving of the pedestal on which he is placed to-day as a hero before the people of Canada. Who forgets what an enormous amount of influence the sermon delivered by Father Dowd had upon the population of this country? Here is a gentleman who, being outside of all party questions, outside of any political consideration, having merely at heart the interest of his own people, states positively that he has had an interview with Bishop Grandin, and says:

"He had enjoyed the privilege of a personal interview with His Lordship Mgr. Grandin, Bishop of the North-West Territory, the scene of the late rebellion. His Lordship's own lips he had heard the recital of all the atrocities that had been committed by the pagan Indians and easily deceived half-breeds, urged on by a bad and unscrupulous man; how poor missionaries had been butchered almost under His Lordship's eyes; how the half-breeds had been led to revolt not only against the Government of the country, but under their wicked leader had been induced to abandon their faith and turn their backs on the devoted clergy to follow that leader who wished to set aside Pope and Church, and all authority, ecclesiastical and civil."

But, Sir, there is more. In all that has been done by this unfortunate man, I think nothing was more deserving of the fate that followed his acts than the manner in which he tried to get the Indians to join in the troubles. I hold in my hand a letter addressed by Poundmaker and other Indians, dated, Cut Knife Hill, April 29th, 1885.

"To Mr. Louis Riel:

"I want to hear news of the progress of God's work. If any event has occurred since your messengers came away let me know of it. Tell me the date when the Americans will reach the Canadian Pacific Railway. Tell me all the news that you have heard from all places where your work is in progress. Big Bear has finished his work; he has taken Fort Pitt. 'If you want me to come to you let me know at once,' he said, and I sent for him at once. I will be four days on the road. Those who have gone to see him will sleep twice on the road. They took twenty prisoners, including the master of Fort Pitt. They killed eleven men, including the agent, two priests and six white men. We are camped on the creek just below Cut Knife Hill, waiting for Big Bear. The Blackfeet have killed sixty police at the Elbow. A half-breed who interpreted for the police, having survived the fight, though wounded, brought this news. Here we have killed six white men. We have not taken the barracks yet, but that is the only entire building in Battleford. All the cattle and horses in the vicinity we have taken. We have lost one man, a Hes Forcé, killed, he being alone, and one wounded. Some soldiers have come from Swift Current, but I don't know their number. We have here guns and rifles of all sorts, but ammunition for them is short. If it be possible, send us ammunition of various kinds. We are weak only for the want of that. You sent word that you would come to Battleford when you had finished your work at Duck Lake. We wait still for you, as we are unable to take the fort without help. If you send us news, send only one messenger. We are impatient to reach you. It would encourage us much to see you, and make us work more heartily. Up to the present everything has gone well with us, but we are constantly expecting the soldiers to visit us here. We trust that God will be as kind to us in the future as He has in the past. We, the undersigned, send greeting to you all.

(Signed),

"POUNDMAKER,
"OOPIDOW-WAY-WIN,
"MOSSINA,
"MEE-TAY-WAY-JE,
"PEE-TAY-CHIEW."

This letter is, to my mind, of very great importance, because it shows what really were the dangers which we were exposed to at the hands of that man. Now, I will address myself to another part of this case. I want to ask any hon.

member who has followed this matter up, whether the Government have gone out of their way, whether they have gone out of any ordinary course of law to punish Riel? Have we not followed the laws which have been passed by this very Parliament? Have we not during the whole of the trial, as far as it was possible for the Government to do, met in every way the requests which were made to us by the counsel for the defence? The hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot), the other day, in addressing this House, stated that the trial had been an unfair one. I do not know how the hon. gentleman can say that this was an unfair trial, in any case he and his friends certainly do not agree on that subject. I read in a speech delivered by the hon. leader of the Opposition in London his appreciation of the manner in which the trial was conducted, and I see that he states there:

"I think it right to say that, in my opinion, Government acted in a proper spirit in providing for the attendance of the prisoner's witnesses; and that, from what I know of their leading counsel, I should think it impossible that in their management of the case there was anything unfair to the prisoner or derogatory to the high character they deservedly enjoy, or the responsible duties they undertook to perform. I am not implying, then, any present doubt as to the justice of the trial. For all my enquiries, it may have been perfectly just. Besides justice, in fact, the creation of a feeling of public confidence, of a general impression that all was fair and that every security was taken for fairness is important, and, in that view of the duties of the authorities, I think these questions should be examined."

But there is more than this, however high an authority this may be. There is also the testimony of one of the counsel for the defence—the testimony of Mr. Fitzpatrick, who in Montreal was interviewed, I believe, by a reporter of the *Star*. In the course of that interview he stated that the trial had been a fair trial, that it had been conducted as fairly as it was possible to be under the circumstances. As I stated yesterday, the responsibility which we had to take was a very considerable one, and I think that every hon. member here and every man outside of this House who really takes to heart the interest of Canada will consider that, in a matter of that importance, it became the bounden duty of the Government to consider what would be in the future the result of the course which we were following. Looking to the future of Canada and in the interests of that future, it seems to me that the head, the one who had got up two rebellions within such a comparatively short period, two rebellions which had cost so much treasure to Canada and so many valuable lives, should suffer the penalty of the crime which he had committed. It was important to teach, with a view to the future, those who had some supposed grievance, or who, believing that they had a grievance, imaginary or real, could simply follow the example given them by Riel in trying to do justice to themselves by taking up arms against the Government and the constitution. Such an example as has been given by this unfortunate man, who has paid the penalty of his high crime, certainly will teach others in the future that if they follow such an example they will become liable to the same fate, and that at any cost the constitution and the institutions of this country must be maintained and protected at all hazards. Nobody will doubt, I am sure, how deeply we felt the nature of the frightful penalty of death which it was our duty to sanction; but, Sir, the example of not only this country, but almost every other country, teaches us that that frightful penalty is, after all, the only means which society has of protecting itself against those who would attack it, and who refuse to respect the law and the constitutions which are established for the protection of society. Twice, Mr. Speaker, had Riel raised the standard of revolt—in 1870 and 1885. Now, I ask any reasonable man, inside or outside of the House, whether we would not have been recreant to our duty if we had allowed him to go on unpunished after a repetition of the rebellion which he had organised in 1869-70? Would we not almost have been inviting him to organise a third rebellion? Would we not have set an example



likely to prove disastrous to this country in future? And if we had interfered with the sentence which was passed by the proper tribunal, would we not in effect have said to the world that the Government of Canada winked at such crimes as that rebellion, with all its frightful murders and other sad consequences? I think we would have failed in our duty, we would have lacked that courage which, as public men and as responsible Ministers of the Crown, we ought to possess, if we had not, having regard solely to our duty, allowed the law to take its course and the sentence to be executed. Sir, I stated in another place and at another time, that I hated rebellion, and that I had no sympathy for rebels, and I have been fiercely attacked for that statement. Well, Sir, I beg to-day to repeat that statement; I beg to repeat it from my place in Parliament, and to express the hope that all those who are dear to me, and all those who will bear my name, will always be true to the sentiment I expressed on that occasion. I go further, and say I believe that the Province of Quebec, that Province of which I am so proud, and which is my native Province—I believe that that Province hates rebellion and has no sympathy for rebels. True it is, that in a moment of surprise public opinion, but a portion only of public opinion, may have been carried away by agitators who, for some object or other, desired to turn that public opinion against the Government of the day. True it is that for the moment a portion of that public opinion seemed to disapprove of the action of the Government in this now historical Riel matter. But, Sir, that surprise lasted only for a moment, and the reaction has already set in; the reaction is growing stronger and stronger every day, and I fear not, when the time comes, to appeal again to that public opinion upon the course which has been followed by the Government upon that matter, and I know my Province sufficiently well to be perfectly sure that the verdict will be that the Government did its duty under most painful and distressing circumstances—did its duty to the country, and that is what we were put here to do. Sir, I was pained to see in some of the papers published in this country, an accusation of disloyalty levelled against the Province of Quebec. Mr. Speaker, those who have read the history of our country, those who know the history of the Province of Quebec, know very well, that in 1812, after that Province, or French Canada as it was called, had changed its allegiance and had passed from one flag to another—that Province, French Canada, stood by the Crown and resisted all the tempting offers which were made to them by the American Republic, to join in the fight against England, in which they were told they would have an opportunity of revenge. Sir, I claim for that Province—and I believe I express the opinion of all those who are in a position to speak for their fellow-countrymen—that in all this vast Dominion of Canada, among all the races which people it, among all the nationalities which make up our population and form the Canadian people, there is not one nationality, there is not one people more loyal and more true to the Crown of England than the people of the Province of Quebec. Sir, we want nothing but what is due to us. We care little if we are traduced in the columns of certain papers; we want nothing more than our rights, we want no privileges which are not accorded to others, but we want to be treated on an equal footing with everybody else. In any case, I can say that in the ranks of the Conservative party, at least, there are no disloyal men. Whether it be on the shores of the St. Lawrence, or whether it be on the banks of the Saskatchewan, when we shoulder our rifles it is for the purpose of maintaining the authority of the law and defending the Government of the country, not to aid and abet rebellion and rebels. I must say, Sir, that I was surprised when I read, if properly reported, a statement made by the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier). I read in the papers published in Montreal the following statement:—

"If I had been on the banks of the Saskatchewan when the rebellion broke out I would have taken up arms against the Government."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I happened, shortly after reading this statement, to read over the oath of office which the hon. gentleman had taken on the 8th October, 1877, when he became a member of the Privy Council of Canada, and I read in that oath:

"I, Wilfred Laurier, do solemnly and sincerely swear that I will faithfully bear true allegiance to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, as Sovereign of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and this Dominion of Canada, dependent on and belonging to the same Kingdom, and that I will defend her to the utmost of my power against all traitorous conspiracies, and all attempts whatever which may be made against her person, Crown and dignity; and that I will use my utmost endeavors to disclose and make known to Her Majesty, her heirs or successors, all treason or traitorous conspiracies, and attempts which I shall know to be against her or any of them; and all this I do swear without any qualification, mental reservation or secret reservation."

I believe the hon. gentleman who represents Magantic (Mr. Langelier) stated that that outbreak was not against the Crown but against the Government. That hon. gentleman is a lawyer, and I have no manner of doubt that he knows perfectly well that the British North America Act, section 9, declares:—

"The Executive Government and authority of and over Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen."

Taking it whichever way the hon. gentleman pleases, he will see that the statement—which, of course, I suppose is properly reported (I know not whether such is the case, and I was not present at that great meeting when the hon. member for Quebec East delivered himself of that opinion)—is an extraordinary statement. I am very glad to say that within the ranks of the Conservative party at least we do not possess any gentleman who would, I believe, make such a statement. I stated that we simply did our duty towards Canada and towards the Province of Quebec. We claim for our people, for those who are the descendants of the very men who opened up to Christianity and civilisation this vast North American continent, equal rights with the people of other nationalities who inhabit the country. Upon that point we will never give in; I know, for one, I would not consent to give in upon any question of equality of rights with any other Province in the Dominion. In any case it is our interest to have a criminal law in this country which applies equally to French and English, to Scotch and Irish. There must be no law different for one man from that which is applicable to another; there must be no criminal law which applies to one nationality and does not apply to another nationality. We wish to be one Canadian people, united, happy and law abiding, and it is only on that condition we can carry out, or attempt to carry out, what I believe is reserved for us to do upon this continent. I, for one at least, can never agree to pressing upon the people of the Province of Quebec a feeling of jingoism which would be fatal to us. This feeling, if carried out, would mean isolation and the separation of the Province of Quebec from the other Provinces, and it would arouse against the Province of Quebec a hostile feeling from the other component parts of the Dominion. In reading up this Riel case I also observed that some people supposed that the people of the Province of Quebec were not in sympathy with the aspirations of the people of the other Provinces. I can assure this House that they are completely mistaken, if they suppose for one moment that sound public opinion in our Province is not in sympathy with sound public opinion in other Provinces; and they are also mistaken if they suppose for one moment that the people of the Province of Quebec are in sympathy with this Riel movement. The other night the hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) denied, as I understood him, that it had been attempted to organise a French National Party upon the Riel question. Allow me to quote from the speech which the hon. gentleman delivered at the meeting on the Champ de Mars, and from that speech and the speech of Mr. Mercier and other evidence I possess, I

want to know whether it is possible for the hon. member for Quebec East to ignore the fact that an attempt was made to organise a French National party in the Province of Quebec, that all party lines should disappear and a French National party be organised. Here is an extract of the speech which the hon. member for Quebec East delivered at the meeting on the Champ de Mars, as reported in *La Patrie* of 26th November, 1885 (translation):

"Henceforth there will be neither Liberals nor Conservatives; only the great national party composed of the old liberals and the old conservatives. If he was called upon to make an historical sketch of the grievances of the half-breeds, he might say that they had been the victims of all kinds of extortions, and he believes that in such a case none of his hearers would have hesitated in shouldering a musket to fight against shameless speculators."

Mr. Meroier, who was also present on the same occasion, stated (translation):

"In the face of these crimes, of these failings, what is our duty? We believe we have three things to do in order to punish the offenders: To break the alliance which our members have made with the Orangemen, and to seek, in a more congenial and less dangerous alliance, the protection of our national interests. To unite! How glad I feel when I pronounce this word! For twenty years past I have sought to unite the vital forces of the nation."

I believe, moreover, that shortly after that great meeting and several other meetings which were held, the object of which was to organize this National party, communications were made to my hon. colleague and friend the Secretary of State, wherein he was offered the leadership of that new French National party; that the Liberals and the Conservatives which would compose this new Liberal party, he was assured, would accept him as their leader. I notice that in making that assertion the hon. gentleman quoted some speeches, but, Sir, the only one which he did quote was a speech of the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Desjardins), a Conservative at that time, and in making his statement about the organisation of the French National party he certainly did not quote any of Mr. Mercier's speeches, or the speeches delivered by any Liberals on that occasion. I cannot but ask myself the question, how it can be possible that our people in the Province of Quebec should have any admiration for Riel. As is well known, our people are sincere Catholics; they are led to a very great extent by their clergy, owing to the great attachment existing between the people and the clergy, and how could it be possible that the people of the Province of Quebec would have such an admiration for that man. For his own purposes he gave up his religion; for his own purposes he was ready to give up his own people; and I ask again, how is it possible that this man could be a hero? The letter which I read of Monseigneur Grandin shows what frightful destruction, what misery he had caused to the people in that district. Anyone reading the letters which my hon. friend, the member from Montreal Centre (Mr. Curran), quoted the other day, from the papers published in the *Propagation of the Faith*—I say, for one who has read such papers, and knows anything of the position of those parishes on the Saskatchewan previous to the rebellion, how is it possible to recognise in the man who has laid waste almost every hamlet on the Saskatchewan; how is it possible to have any admiration for such a man, but rather a feeling of hatred than anything else. I never did consider, and I cannot consider now, that his cause has ever been our cause. I cannot for one consent to recognise in him the representative of our race. He is not the representative of our race, and has never been so. I was told a short time ago by an hon. gentleman who knows whereof he was speaking on that subject, that the brother of Louis Riel stated that he would sooner vote for almost any man than a French Canadian. I want to know why we, the people of the Province of Quebec, without having been consulted by him when he first undertook the agitation which resulted in the rebellion—I want to know whether we should look upon his cause as ours, and whether we should look upon him as the repre-

sentative of our people? He is not the representative of our race, and I for one will not consent to recognise him as such. Now, Sir, I am quite certain that if we had interfered with the law, if we had interfered with the sentence which was passed, I believe there would have been a universal clamor all over the Province of Quebec if we had not done what we did, and if, after the sentence had been carried out, we had given up our seats as representatives of the Dominion Cabinet. Now, I must ask the indulgence of the House while I refer to a matter which has been very much made use of against me personally, and which has been intentionally misinterpreted by my opponents for the purpose of injuring me in my own Province. I refer to that often spoken of banquet which I attended in the city of Winnipeg. I was accused of having accepted a banquet on the day upon which Riel was to pay the penalty for his crime. The hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot) who to-day thinks very differently of myself from what he used to, has deemed it his duty, in delivering his speech the other night, to refer to that banquet, and to say that I had gone up for the purpose of drinking champagne under the gallows of Riel. Well, Sir, the matter as I understand it is very simple and easily explained. I was going up to Winnipeg, as is well known, for the purpose of settling the claims arising out of the rebellion. People had travelled hundreds and hundreds of miles to come to Winnipeg so as to be able to procure evidence which it was necessary to procure and to have their claims adjusted. It was at the very beginning of winter, and some of these people were absolutely dependent on the money which they were entitled to get, whatever that might be, from the Government, to be able to stand the rigor of a north-western winter. On my way up I received a telegram communicating to me the information that my friend, the Minister of the Interior, who had been travelling in the North-West on matters connected with his Department, and who had created, as he generally does wherever he goes, a most favorable impression, had been tendered a banquet by his friends in Winnipeg. I was invited to join that banquet. Now, Sir, I left Ottawa on the 31st of October. I knew when I left, as a member of the Government, that Riel was not to be executed on the 10th. I knew that the medical men were going up—in fact, they left on the very same day. I shall read a letter which has been addressed to me by the Right Hon. Sir John Macdonald, which the hon. member for Quebec East read, but did not read in full. This letter is addressed to me, and is dated 20th November, 1885:

"OTTAWA, 20th November, 1885.

"MY DEAR CARON.—You say you are charged with having left Ottawa before the decision of the Governor in Council was arrived at with respect to Louis Riel and as if for the purpose of avoiding being party to the decision.

"This is not the case. The Council had come to the conclusion that it was necessary, in the interest of justice, that the sentence should be allowed to be carried into effect, in your presence as a member of the Council, before you left for Winnipeg.

"But in consequence of Mr. Lemieux's affidavit that Riel's state of mind had altered for the worse after conviction, it was settled in your presence that an enquiry should be made as to whether since his trial he had ceased to know right from wrong. And in that case only would the carrying out of the sentence be interfered with. Your presence at Winnipeg was absolutely necessary to settle the accounts for the military expedition caused by the outbreak.

"Yours faithfully,

"J. A. MACDONALD."

That shows, Sir, that when I left it was decided in Council that unless the medical reports were such as to establish that the mental state of Louis Riel had changed for the worse since his conviction and sentence, the sentence should be allowed to be carried out. The Order in Council of the 12th is not at all in contradiction to this letter. The letter shows that it was decided to send out medical men, and it was understood in Council that in consequence of that the execution could not take place on the 10th.

The report of the medical men is dated Regina, the 8th, and it was impossible for it to reach here and the order for the execution to be sent up on the 10th. That was physically impossible. Riel was respite by the magistrate until the 16th, and the Order in Council of the 11th was that the law should take its course. Therefore I cannot see where there is any contradiction, as some hon. gentlemen have tried to show, between the letter of Sir John Macdonald to me and the Order in Council I refer to. I was also very severely handled for having uttered the words I did at that banquet. Well, Sir, I must repeat what I have already said, that the few remarks I made there have been published, and I am perfectly ready to be judged by my utterances on that occasion; and I ask, Sir, is it not quite evident that it was for the purpose of injuring me that this great cry was raised about this banquet at Winnipeg? If it were within my knowledge that the execution was not to take place on the 10th, what reason had I to refuse an invitation that was conveyed to me by the Liberal-Conservative Association at Winnipeg, the organisation of our own political party, composed of gentlemen in the confidence of the leaders of that party, and who were tendering a banquet to the Hon. Mr. White, and were kind enough to invite me? It really made no difference when I knew that the execution was not then to take place; and the statement I made there was simply what every loyal man in this country would make, that I had no sympathy with rebels and that I hated rebellion. Is it an utterance that I, as a French-Canadian, coming from the Province of Quebec, should not have made? Is it an utterance that my people would refuse to allow me to make in the city of Winnipeg, or in any other place in this Dominion, or outside of this Dominion? But, Sir, I was attacked. Men attempted to make my case different from the case of my colleagues, who, I must say, and I am proud to say, have been so loyal to me during the whole trouble. The men who attacked me said that we had given up the rights of our Province, that we had been traitors to our own people, and had sacrificed them to the interests of Orangism and Protestantism. Well, Sir, the return my hon. friend placed on the Table of this House to-day shows how much we were influenced by any consideration of that kind; and, Sir, many other statements equally rash will disappear when it is possible to lay on the Table the papers which will show how unjustly we have been treated during the whole of the agitation. The hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot), in speaking of myself, stated that I had sacrificed my Province and my people to Orangism. Well, Sir, that hon. gentleman when he came to us—and I admire him for doing so—and offered his services and the services of the battalion he commanded, to go and help to quell that rebellion, was he doing any more than his duty? Was he not doing just as I have done during the whole of this trouble? He, a soldier, was fighting the battles of his country at the front; and I, invested with authority as Minister of Militia, was trying my very best to make those who went up as comfortable as it was possible to make them; and, Sir, I do not want to be judged by any other standard than the standard by which that hon. gentleman himself judged me. I shall refer to some of his letters and telegrams in which he expressed his great admiration for the services I had rendered. In fact, Sir, in his great kindness during that period, he exaggerated my merit as he to-day exaggerates what he supposes to be my misdeeds. But before I pass away from the subject of the banquet, I would like to place before the House some statutory declarations which were sent to me, and to explain the object of those declarations. I am not known as a rule to run after dinners or to put myself to any great trouble to get dinners. Having a number of friends, I can generally manage to get a dinner and to enjoy a dinner without having to beg for one. But it was stated in the papers, and an hon. gentleman used the state-

ment, that that banquet would have fallen through if I had not given a pledge to those who organised it that Louis Riel was going to be hanged. Well, Sir, I ask whether it is not as unjust towards the gentlemen who organised that banquet as it is to myself to say that those men, who sent an invitation by telegram to two Ministers of the Crown, and who are gentlemen, would have consented to break their engagement with us unless we gave them a pledge? If any hon. gentleman had come to me and asked me to make any pledge, however insignificant, in order to get a dinner from him or others, I would have said, Keep your dinner, I can pay for one, and do not wish to sit down at the dinner table of any gentleman who would force from me a pledge to do however small a thing in exchange for his hospitality. I have here communications which were sent to me by the organisers of this banquet. I shall read one of them, as I do not want to take up the time of the House by reading them all, but, if allowed to do so, shall hand them to *Hansard*, so that they may appear in the report of the debate, as it is of some importance to me that they should appear. The paper I am about to read is a declaration from Mr. Searth, who is well known here and better known still in Toronto, and whose honor is above any suspicion. His declaration runs as follows:—

"I, William Bain Searth, of the city of Winnipeg, in the county of Selkirk and Province of Manitoba, Esq., do solemnly declare—
 "1. That it has come to my knowledge that a report has been circulated that the banquet which was given to Sir A. P. Caron and his colleagues on the 10th day of November, under the auspices of the Conservative Association, would not have taken place had it not been for an assurance from the said Sir A. P. Caron that Riel would hang."

Mr. MILLS. Hear, hear.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON:

"2. That such report is untrue."

The hon. gentleman might say "hear, hear" now. Although an opponent of mine, he must be glad to hear that the character of one of his colleagues in the House of Commons has been vindicated in a matter of this kind—

"3. That I am the President of the Winnipeg Association, and was Chairman of the Banqueting Committee, and presided at the said banquet, and have a knowledge of the facts connected with the same. 4. That on the 30th day of September last, I mentioned to the Hon. Thomas White, who was then in Winnipeg, that the Conservative Association would like to entertain him at a banquet on his return from his trip to Manitoba and the North-West Territories, and asked him to let me know when he was likely to return so that the Association might be properly advised. 5. That on or about the 26th of October last past, the said Hon. Thomas White telegraphed me that he would be in Winnipeg on Tuesday, the 3rd day of November last past. 6. That on the receipt of said telegraph, I called the Association together, and it was then decided to tender a banquet to the Hon. Mr. White on the 10th day of November, and as it was reported that Sir A. P. Caron was coming to Winnipeg, it was decided at such meeting to make it a banquet to the two Ministers, Sir A. P. Caron and the Hon. Thomas White, to take place on the aforesaid date. 7. That at the following telegrams were sent:—

"WINNIPEG, November 3rd, 1885.

"Hon. THOMAS WHITE, Manitou, Man.

"Conservative Association tender you and Sir A. P. Caron banquet Tuesday evening, 10th inst. Please wire acceptance.
 (Signed) "W. B. SCARTH."

"WINNIPEG, November 3, 1885.

"Sir A. P. CARON, Ottawa, Ontario.

"Conservative Association of Winnipeg tender you and Mr. White banquet Tuesday evening 10th inst. Wire whether you will be here.
 (Signed) "W. B. SCARTH."

To which replies were received as follows:—

"CHICAGO, ILL., November 5, 1885.

"To CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION, Winnipeg.
 "Shall be in Winnipeg Saturday. Many thanks to the Conservative Association of Winnipeg for the kindness in tendering banquet to myself and colleague.

(Signed) "A. P. CARON."

"MONROE, November 3, 1885.

"To W. B. SCARTH

"Please convey to Conservative Association my grateful acceptance to proposed banquet on 10th inst.
 (Signed) "THOMAS WHITE."

"8. That preparations were at once commenced on the strength of said replies, and without any other assurance or communications to said Ministers, and without any interruption continued up to the time of the said banquet, notwithstanding the fact that it was known before said banquet that Riel was reprieved. 9. That I did not, nor, so far as I know, did any member of the banquet committee or any person having any control of the arrangements of the banquet, speak to Sir A. P. Caron before said banquet about whether Riel would be hanged or not, or seek to obtain any assurance from Sir A. P. Caron that Riel would be hanged. 10. That I did not, nor, I believe, did any of the banquet committee or other person in charge of said banquet, hear or have any assurance from Sir A. P. Caron, before said banquet took place, that Riel would be hanged. 11. That the question of the Government dealing with Riel was mentioned by some members of the said committee at a meeting held on the evening or the afternoon of the day previous to the banquet, and the only statement I then made was that we might rely on the law being properly administered, and could safely leave the matter in the hands of the leader of the Government who had for so long a time properly and well administered the affairs of State. 12. No deputation, delegation or body was ever appointed on behalf of the Conservative Association to discuss the question of Riel with Sir A. P. Caron, and, of course, no such discussion took place. And I make this declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of an Act passed in the 37th year of Her Majesty's reign, entitled 'An Act for the suppression of Voluntary and extra-Judicial Oaths.'

(Signed) "W. B. SCARTE."

"Declared before me at the city of Winnipeg, in the county of Selkirk, the 30th day of November, 1885.

(Signed) "A. D. McOLSHAGHAN,
"Commissioner for taking Affidavits."

The following is Mr. Gilmour's declaration:—

"I, Thomas Henry Gilmour, of the county of Selkirk, in the Province of Manitoba, barrister-in-law, do solemnly declare as follows:—

"I now am and since before the 1st November instant I have been the secretary of the Winnipeg Liberal-Conservative Association. 2. I acted as secretary of the committee appointed by the said association to tender a banquet to Sir A. P. Caron and the Hon. Thomas White at Winnipeg, on the 10th day of November, inst., and as one of said committee I was *ex officio* secretary of all the sub-committees appointed in connection with said banquet. 3. In the said capacity of secretary I was at all the meetings of the banquet committee, and while arrangements were being made for said banquet, and for about twelve days prior to said banquet, I came in daily contact with the various members of the banquet committee in connection with the arrangements for the banquet. 4. I met and conversed with Sir A. P. Caron prior to the banquet, and at no time did I ever hear any one speak to him that the banquet would not be held if Riel was not executed, and I never heard Sir A. P. Caron state or intimate, to myself or to anyone else, that Riel would be executed, and I never heard any one give any assurance to that effect. On Monday afternoon, the 9th November—the day prior to the banquet—a meeting of the banquet committee was held to make final arrangements for the banquet, and I was present at this meeting and acted as secretary to the committee, and at this time I did not know, and to the best of my knowledge none of the members of the committee knew, what action would be taken regarding the execution of Riel; and an enquiry having been made by one of the members of the committee as to whether it was known whether Riel would be executed or not, Mr. W. B. Scarte, the President of the said Association, who occupied the chair, then stated that all Conservatives should be satisfied that the Government would adopt a right course, whatever might be done, and that he thought this question should not in any way affect our action concerning the banquet, and up to the hour of the banquet, and until after it was over, I had no intimation from any source whatever regarding Riel, further than that he was reprieved until the 16th November, and I do not believe any member of the banquet committee or of the association received any intimation whatever at any time from Sir A. P. Caron as to the course that the Government would adopt in regard to Riel.

"That the statement or report which I understand are in circulation in some quarters to the effect that the banquet would not have taken place had not the assurance been given that Riel would be executed is without foundation and is wholly untrue, to the best of my knowledge, the sole motive on the part of the Conservatives being the desire to honor two of their trusted leaders; and I make this declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of an Act passed in the 37th year of Her Majesty's reign, entitled: 'An Act for the suppression of Voluntary and extra-Judicial Oaths.'

(Signed) "T. H. G." UR.

"Declared before me at the city of Winnipeg, in the county of Selkirk, this 30th day of November, 1885.

"J. W. B. DABY, Commissioner for tak

These declarations, which are also corroborated by me, I have received from my valued friend the hon. Mr. For Provencher (Mr. Royal) at the time, and several other letters from gentlemen who saw me while I was in Winnipeg, and who distinctly state that the report, which was circulated with the intention of injuring me, was altogether untrue. The letter to which I referred from Mr. Royal is in French, and reads as follows:—

[Translation.]

"St. BONIFACE, MANITOBA;

"November 30th, 1885.

"MY DEAR SIR ADOLPHE.—I received your letter of the 24th and I hasten to state that it is untrue that the Conservative banquet given at Winnipeg, only took place after an interview which you and the Minister of Interior had with a deputation, and during which interview you promised that Riel would be hung. If my memory serves me right, you received your invitation to attend that banquet organised in honor of Mr. White, at St. Paul, on your way to Winnipeg."

(Signed) "J. ROYAL."

It was also stated at some meeting that my own compatriots, the French Canadians in Manitoba, had refused to entertain me or to have any communication with me after the banquet had taken place. Here is another letter which I received from Mr. Royal on this point:

[Translation.]

"St. BONIFACE, 27th December, 1885.

"DEAR SIR.—When you paid a visit to Mgr. Taché, in November last, I am happy to state that not only His Lordship received you, but made you visit the institutions of St. Boniface in his own carriage. His Lordship accompanied you, and after you had left St. Boniface, he took you to Winnipeg to visit the convent of the Rev. Sisters of Jesus-Marie. I saw you on that occasion; the Superintendent of Education, Mr. Bernier, and Mr. Larivière, a member of the Provincial Ministry also accompanied you.

(Signed) "J. ROYAL."

Now, these gentlemen who so kindly tendered me the hospitality of Winnipeg, and who were so good as to accompany me to the various institutions which make that city very interesting, showed me all these attentions after the celebrated banquet had taken place; and I would like to know whether these men who take as great an interest in North-Western matters as any of the agitators who unsuccessfully tried to get up a cry in Quebec against the Government—I ask, is it possible to suppose, if my conduct had been so reprehensible as represented, that all these gentlemen in Winnipeg would have shown me the kindness they did? But the hon. gentleman, a few evenings ago, stated also that some telegrams had been sent by me to the right hon. the leader of the Government. I take a telegram, I do not know whether the hon. gentleman referred to this or not, but it is the telegram which appeared in his organ, and which was communicated through that journal to the press of the country.—I take these telegrams as republished in the *Mail*. The hon. gentleman stated that, on November 8th, Sir A. P. Caron despatched the following telegram to Sir John Macdonald:—

"People very much excited. I fear if the law is not allowed to take its course there will be more trouble than anticipated. I can produce no evidence of this, but know it to be a fact."

I can tell the hon. gentleman that I never sent such a telegram. That telegram was never sent by me to Sir John Macdonald or to anybody else. The hon. gentleman, seeing a contradiction of this having been sent by me, turned around and said: No, it is not Sir A. P. Caron who sent it to Sir John A. Macdonald, but it is Sir John A. Macdonald who sent it to Sir A. P. Caron. In any case I did not attach more importance to this statement than it deserved, but I hope the denial which I give is emphatic enough to serve the purpose of preventing the circulation of such a rumor in the country. Now I come to reading the interesting letters which I stated I would read, from the member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot). I think he should not have stated, even being a bitter opponent of mine, what he did publish, that I had attacked the 9th Battalion of Quebec. I will leave it to every hon. member of this House if during the troubles, the unfortunate troubles in the North-West, I did not take every possible opportunity of expressing my honest conviction that the two French battalions which went to the front were equal to any battalions that were sent to the North-West. I ask the hon. gentleman whether I did not on every occasion—little time as I had from the pressing occupations which required my continual attention at the Department—whether I did not, when any telegram or anything came to me which could be of any use to our volunteers, whom I admired so much during those trying times, take the first opportunity

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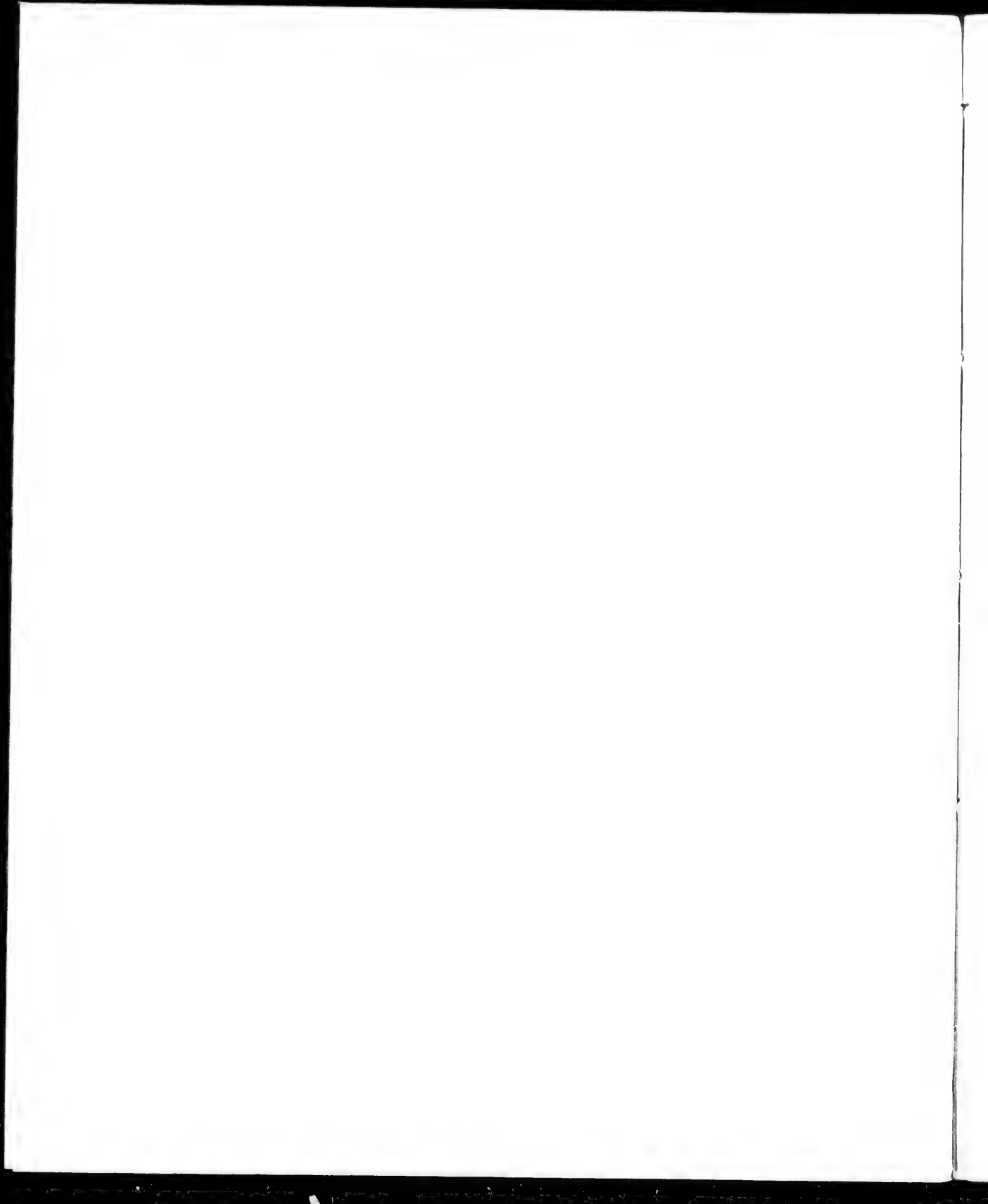
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of mentioning it to the House and praising those volunteers as they deserved to be praised? How is it possible that I could have injured that battalion which the hon. gentleman is so anxious to defend, when it is not attacked? How is it possible, in view of the letters which I hold from him, in which he says:

"Thanks, many thanks, for what you have said of the 9th Battalion." Does that look like a letter addressed to a man who was hostile to that battalion? Does it look—jealous as the member from Bellechasse is of his battalion, and properly so—like a letter which he would have addressed to me if I had been unjust to the 9th Battalion; but to-day to return him thanks for having done so. These letters were very interesting at the time, and they turn out very useful now. Here is one, dated the 15th April, 1885:

[Translation.]

"Everywhere was discovered the friendly hand of the Minister and of the Department, who seemed to me to have done wonders in the fulfilment of their duty."

He goes on again:

"Thank you for what you have said in the House about the 9th Battalion. I have a fine battalion. They are manly soldiers and I appeal to their heart."

(Signed) "G. AMYOT."

Mr. BERGERON. They are men of heart.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. They are brave men, and all brave men are full of heart. In another letter of the 9th May, the hon. member says:

[Translation.]

"I must tell you, and you may repeat it on my behalf, that the Militia Department has always done the utmost for the army."

(Signed) "G. AMYOT."

Mr. AMYOT. I change nothing of that.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. Further:

[Translation.]

"On the northern shore of Lake Superior, there again, at each step may be seen the efforts of the Department to allay the misery, &c. Besides, when we consented to make this journey we knew we were not going to a wedding. The spirit, the health and the moral of the troops are excellent. If I go back to the country, I will endeavor to see that justice shall be dealt to those who, like yourself, do their utmost to ensure the comfort of the volunteers."

The hon. gentleman also differed from what he used to say in his newspaper, and out of it, in attacking General Middleton who was in command of the troops. Well, in the same letter which the hon. gentleman addressed to me he says:

[Translation.]

"Middleton, who has never been out west, cannot know anything about it. He does his best where he is and is worthy of the highest praise. He is a gallant General, and I have full confidence in him, but he cannot do all by himself in such a vast country as this."

He goes on further to state:

"Olmsted and Strange also ask for reinforcements. I understand how much all this will cost, but we must vanquish by all means, and vanquish once for all."

Now, I fail to see how it is possible that the hon. gentleman, who went up in command of his battalion wishing to conquer, to-day should be so anxious to defend those very people who put us to all this trouble and expense, and endangered the lives of our troops. But, Sir, long after the troubles were all over, it pleased Her Gracious Majesty to confer upon me a title, and, long after the troops had returned here, the hon. gentleman was one of the very first to send me a telegram of congratulation—for which I was very much obliged to him—in which he says: "Most hearty congratulations upon so well deserved a knighthip."

Mr. AMYOT. Would the hon. gentleman kindly give the date of that telegram?

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. August 19th, 1885. I said it was long after the troubles were over.

Mr. AMYOT. They are not over yet.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. The most serious troubles are over, but the trouble which the hon. gentleman is trying to get up, and which is not very serious, is not over, I know.

Mr. AMYOT. Why does it trouble you so much, then?

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. The hon. gentleman reminds me, by asking for the date of this telegram, that he knew very well that Niel was then under sentence of death, and yet he sent this complimentary telegram, for which I felt very much obliged to him.

Mr. AMYOT. Because the *Monde* was saying that Niel would not be hanged.

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. The hon. gentleman knows that the first duty of a soldier under fire is to be calm and not to get excited. Well, Mr. Speaker, my friends in Quebec, the leading men there, joined in presenting me with an address of congratulation when this title was conferred on me, and one of the very first to sign this address was the hon. gentleman again, and, of course, he must have read it, because I know him too well to believe that he would sign an address of that kind without taking the trouble to read it. In that address occurred this paragraph:—

[Translation.]

"What an amount of gratitude the country owes you for the activity and zeal with which you have fulfilled your important duties during these days of trouble. Our soldiers, whose heroic courage during the recent campaign is now known far and wide, know how to appreciate, to their just value, the promptness with which you have acted, your vigilance and your anxiety for their welfare."

That was signed by the hon. gentleman. Sir, the hon. gentleman also said that I had attacked the troops. Now, I feel that more, if possible, than anything which the hon. gentleman may have said, and I felt it at the time, because I can not, even to-day, express to you the great anxiety which, night and day, lay upon me when I felt the responsibility entrusted to me of the welfare of the battalions in the field; and I can say, in justice to myself, that I believe that I did, whether successfully or not, the best I could, and if there was any fault, it was in my ability and not in my intentions. I did everything I could, as the hon. gentleman had to admit, to make our troops as comfortable as possible, and to spare them every possible trouble that was in my power. But the hon. gentleman went up to the front, and he expressed his opinion about the troops that were there. He has placed upon the paper a notice of motion to produce his telegrams and his letters, and really, I am very glad indeed to be able to do so. But in order to give him an *avant goût* of some of his telegrams, I wish to read one or two of them. Here is one dated Swift Current, 25th April, 1885:

"Caron.—Arrived here all right. Found Gen. Laurie perfect soldier. Advance of Middleton's troops too hurried; consequence being immense useless expense. Volunteers should be used for garrison and protection of place and ammunition. American scouts and Indians and half-breeds doing the same kind of fighting as rebels, should do the fighting and attacking. Part of Middleton's force exposed to be slaughtered. Troops hearty. Rely upon 9th."

So I did. Now here is another telegram dated at Calgary, 14th May, 1885:

"I add, and I persist in saying, that this war should be made by men fighting in the same way as rebels. Volunteers are specially adapted for protection of forts and provisions."

It had not come to my knowledge that the provisions were in danger, and, so far as I can judge, they were well looked after by the volunteers. But it goes on to say:

"Our volunteers are being slaughtered. 500 scouts are worth 3,000 volunteers for actual fighting of that kind. Men cheerful."

(Signed) "G. AMYOT."

The hon. gentleman when he deemed it his duty to attack me, as he has a perfect right to do if he pleased, should not have forgotten that he himself had expressed an opinion as to what I had done for the troops, and he should not have taunted me with having attacked the 9th Battalion when within his own telegrams appears a judgment about our force that I cannot understand. The hon. member also attacked the Major-General who commanded the forces. I will read to the House a letter (with the General's permis-

sion) which the hon. member addressed to the Major-General on the occasion of his being knighted. It reads:

[Translation.]

QUEBEC, August 26th, 1885.

"SIR FREDERICK D. MIDDLETON, K.O.M.G.,
Ottawa.

"DEAR SIR,—I should have written you sooner to join in the unanimous concert of congratulations which you receive from all parts, but a prolonged absence from the city prevented me. Your elevation to the Knighthood is only the just recognition of the services which you have rendered to the Dominion of Canada, and the honors which are bestowed upon you is reflected on all those whom you have encouraged by your personal bravery surely guided by your experience, and who have all largely benefited from the sciences which you have acquired during an honorable military career.

"I deeply regret the attacks of a mean and malicious press against 'our general,' but your reputation stands so high that these foolish slanders cannot reach it.

"Allow me to present, through you, my respects to lady Middleton and believe me,

"Your very devoted,
G. AMYOT."

Mr. RYKERT. By whom is that letter signed?

Sir ADOLPHE CARON. By the hon. member for Bellechasse (Mr. Amyot). So far as the General is concerned it is no use my expressing an opinion which everyone who knows anything about military matters has already expressed, in regard to the services he rendered. In England and Canada his services have been justly appreciated, and in any case it comes with very bad grace from the hon. member to have attacked the Major-General after having expressed in writing the opinion I have read respecting his services. Before concluding I desire to clear up one point which has been referred to by several hon. members who have spoken during this debate. It has been stated here that in consequence of Riel having surrendered, the Government should have pardoned him. I state, and I am prepared to show, that Riel never surrendered at all. I read first a declaration made by the Major-General himself. It is an important point for history, and it has an important bearing on the question in debate, and it will be interesting to hon. members to see the interpretation which the Major-General places upon a certain letter. The Major-General says:

"I only wrote one letter to Riel, on the last day of Batoche fighting, telling him (in answer to a letter from him brought by Mr. Astley) that 'if he would place his women and children in safety, and let me know where the place was, I would take care no shots were fired in that direction.' When Astley brought me that letter he told me Riel was in a 'funk' and he thought he would surrender, and he asked me what terms he could carry back to him. My answer was, 'unconditional surrender.' The second note from Riel, thanking me for my letter, was handed to me just as we were forcing, under a heavy fire, our way on to the clear ground about Batoche. Astley again told me that he thought Riel would surrender, but I answered, 'too late now; we are almost there, and I must push on to save the prisoners.' I did not send the letter to Riel, offering to protect him and his council until the 18th May (the day after the last day at Batoche), and I did so because a priest and a half-breed told me they knew, or thought they knew, where Riel was, and that he would give himself up, but that he was afraid of being killed in my camp by some of my men. I then wrote the letter and gave it to the priest to take. He, however, could not find Riel, but the half-breed did, and gave it to him. Early on the morning of the 18th, at Guardapais Crossing, I received information that Riel and Dumont were not many miles off, near the Birch Hills, and I sent off Major Boulton with his mounted infantry, with orders to scour the country towards Batoche, which he did, and Riel, finding troops between himself and Batoche, gave himself up to the three (3) scouts, Hourie, Armstrong and Diehl, who had started with Boulton, but left his detachment, and, spreading out, had come across Riel, with my letter in his pocket. Dumont, who was well mounted and knew the country, escaped.

"FRED. MIDDLETON, Major-General."

Copy of letter sent to Riel alluded to above:

"BATOCHÉ, May 13, 1885.

"MR. RIEL,—I am ready to receive you and your council, and to protect you until your case has been decided upon by the Dominion Government.

"FRED. MIDDLETON, Major-General,
Commanding North-West Field Force."

"Also the declaration of the two scouts who captured
It is as follows:—

"Canada,
North-West Territories,
To Wit:

"We, William Diehl and Robert Armstrong, of Prince Albert, in the North-West Territories, do each of us solemnly declare:

"1. That during the rebellion of half-breeds and Indians which took place on the Saskatchewan in the spring of 1885, we were duly enrolled in the Prince Albert volunteers, and served as scouts for and in connection with said volunteer force for about two months.

"2. We have seen, it is asserted in certain portions of the press in eastern Canada that Louis Riel, the rebel leader, did, after the battle of Batoche, voluntarily surrender and give himself up to the authorities, and that said Louis Riel might have easily escaped from the country had he so desired.

"3. We, together with one Thomas Hourie, were three of the Prince Albert volunteers who took part in the search for Louis Riel and other rebels who took flight after their defeat at the battle of Batoche.

"4. We further distinctly state that we, together with the aforesaid Thomas Hourie, were the three scouts who captured said Louis Riel and handed him over to General Middleton. At the time we made the capture we believed and we now affirm that said Louis Riel had no intention of surrendering himself, but was preparing for a hasty flight. He was then looking for a horse and had in his possession a saddle and bridle, and was well armed. The two half-breeds in whose company we found him (Riel) were also well armed. The statements before referred to that Louis Riel voluntarily gave himself up to us are entirely untrue."

"And we severally make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true, and by virtue of the Act passed in the 37th year of Her Majesty's reign intitled 'An Act for the suppression of Voluntary and extra-Judicial Oaths.'

"WM. DIEHL.
"ROBT. ARMSTRONG.

"Severally declared before me at the town of
Prince Albert, in the North-West Territory,
this 26th day of December, A.D. 1885.

"W. R. GERR,
"A Notary Public for the North-West Territories."

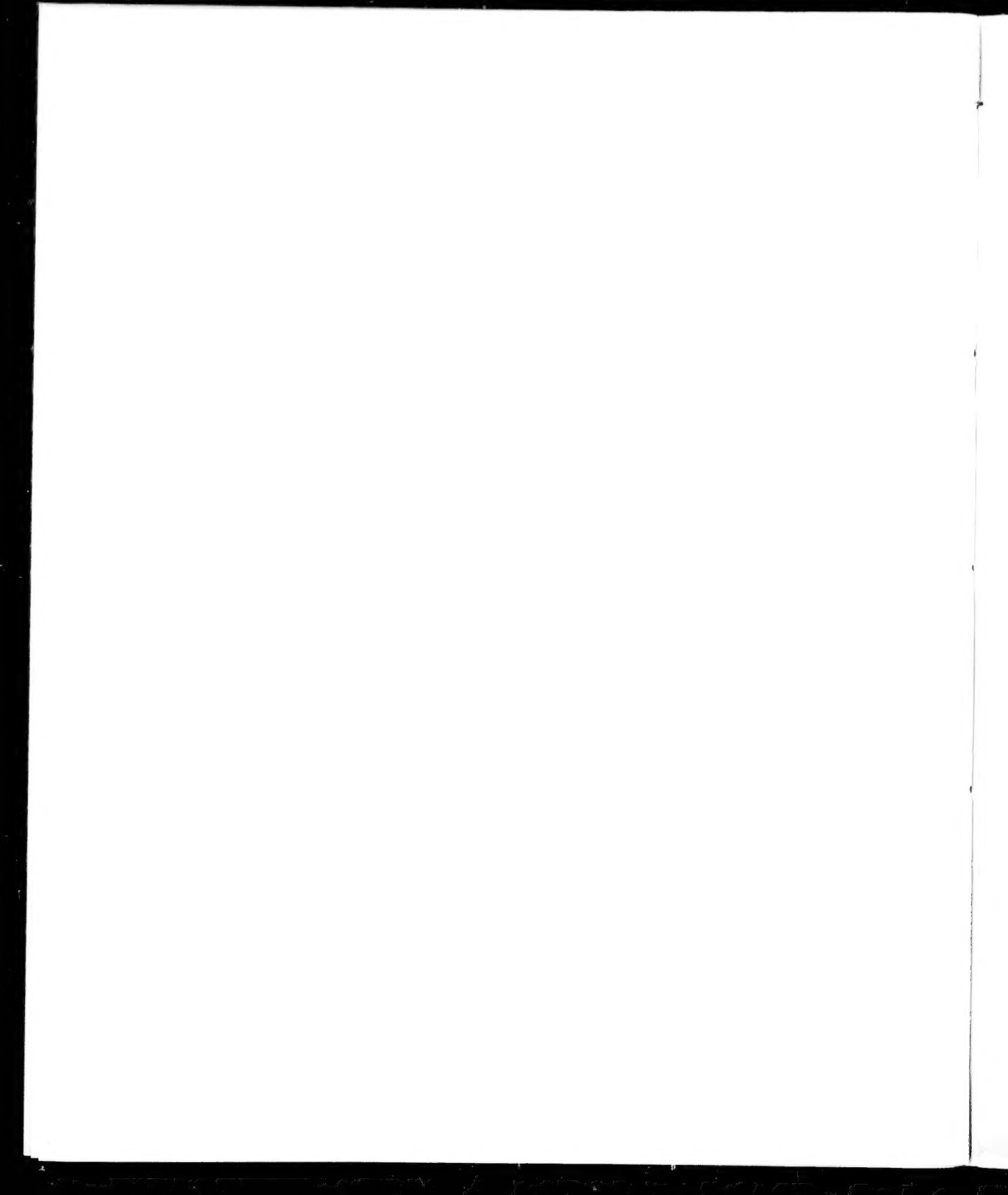
The other scout who was also present when he was arrested, was away from Prince Albert and his declaration could not be obtained, but he stated to several gentlemen whom I have seen since that he viewed it in exactly the same light as those did who made the declaration. I shall also read a portion of a very interesting letter which appeared in the papers from Major Boulton, than whom there is no better authority so far as the history of the campaign is concerned:

"In discussing the question with Astley about the surrender, Riel said: 'There are three things that will save me. One is politics, another is that I have assumed the office of priests and another is that the papers which are all here will implicate the council more than me.'

"On this occasion he wished to surrender and was most anxious to get safely into the General's hands. However, it was too late, and in consequence he had to make his escape as best he could. Astley, however, kept track of him after the day was won, and got a letter signed by the General guaranteeing his protection until handed over to the civil authorities. Upon receiving this he was most anxious to get safely into the General's hands and surrendered to Hourie."

Now, Sir, I think that upon that question the evidence is so far satisfactory that I do not see how it is possible to consider, under this evidence, that Riel surrendered and was in consequence entitled to any consideration from the Government. It was my pleasure, in beginning the few remarks which I considered it my duty to address to the House, to congratulate the hon. member for Quebec East upon the speech which he delivered, and I expressed upon that point my honest opinion with reference to that gentleman. But, Sir, I must regret that his eloquence, which I recognise, should have been used in the defence of a rebellion against Canada. The hon. gentleman charged the Government with having, by its negligence, caused the rebellion. Well, Sir, this charge I deny completely and toto-tally, and I think any impartial man who takes the trouble to read the record will come to the conclusion that the Government are not liable to that charge. In Père André's evidence there occurs the following:—

"Q. Will you state if, since the arrival of the prisoner in the country up to the time of the rebellion, the Government have made any favorable answer to the demands and claims of the half-breeds?—A. Yes, I know they have acceded to certain demands in regard to those who did not have any scrip in Manitoba. A telegram was sent on the 4th of March last, granting the scrip.



"Q. Before that time?—A. Yes, regarding the alteration of survey of lots along the river, there was an answer from the Government saying they would grant it, and that was an important question.

"Q. What question then remained to be settled?—A. The question of patents; that has also been settled in a certain way, because Mr. Duck was sent and I went with him as interpreter.

"Q. What other question remained?—A. Only the question of wood, timber."

This shows that a telegram was communicated to him as it was also communicated to Riel and to others, stating that these questions had been settled. Besides the evidence which I have just read from Father André, the following occurs in Charles Nolin's examination:—

"Q. Were those conditions accepted by the prisoner?—A. Yes. The next day I received an answer to a telegram from Macdonald; the telegram said that the Government was going to grant the rights of the half-breeds, but there was nothing said about Riel's claim.

"Q. Did you show the answer to Riel?—A. I showed the reply I received next Sunday.

"Q. That was in the month of—?—A. February.

"Q. In the beginning of the month?—A. Yes.

"Q. What did the prisoner say?—A. He answered that it was 400 years that the English had been robbing and that it was time to put a stop to it, that it had been going on long enough."

Immediately on ascertaining that the Metis grievances were all settled, but that he was not receiving the money that he wanted to get from Government, on the 5th March he determined to take up arms. Let us see again what Charles Nolin says on this point:

"A. The prisoner came with Gabriel Dumont to see me. He proposed a plan to me that he had written upon a piece of paper. He said that he had decided to take up arms and to induce the people to take up arms, and the first thing was to fight for the glory of God, for the honor of religion and the salvation of our souls. The prisoner said that he had already nine names upon the paper, and he asked for my name. I told him that his plan was not perfect but since he wanted to fight for the love of God, I would propose a more perfect plan. My plan was to have public prayers in the Catholic chapel during nine days, and to go to confession and communion and then to do as our consciences told us."

This is the man who is held up as a hero and patriot. All he wanted, as is quite apparent, was to get money from the Government. If he could succeed in getting that money, we see what he intended to do with it. On page 94 we find:

"He said also if he got the money he would go to the United States and start a paper and raise the other nationalities in the States."

He had already organised two rebellions, and after sacrificing the Metis he wanted to get money, which, he said, he was going to use in the United States to raise up all the nationalities and get up another revolution. Is it necessary to give a stronger proof of the wisdom of the Government in not interfering with the sentence of the law upon him?

"He said: Before the grass is that high in the country you will see foreign armies in this country. He said: I will commence by destroying Manitoba, and then I will come and destroy the North-West and take possession of the North-West."

And, forsooth, we are told that we should have shown mercy to this man. I ask any hon. gentleman who has read this evidence whether he showed much mercy to the prisoners and the people who happened to be under him? On page 44 we find:

"He came to the door of the cellar, and the first words I heard him say was: 'Astley! Astley! Come here and go tell Middleton if they—I think massacre was the word used—if they massacre our children and women and children, we will massacre you prisoners.'"

Here was this man, who had arrested these few prisoners on account of their loyalty to their country; on account of their refusing to join in his rebellion, saying that if any harm happened to any of his people (which harm could never have happened if it had not been for his doings) he would massacre all the prisoners in the cellar. Did he show much mercy when he said to McKay what is reported on pages 18 and 19, "Report of Evidence in Riel's Trial?"

"He became very excited and got up and said: 'You don't know what we are after—it is blood! blood! We want blood! It is a war of extermination! Everybody that is against us is to be driven out of the

country. There were two entries in the country, the Government and the Hudson Bay Company.'"

"Q. Yes?—A. He turned to me and said I was a traitor to his Government. That I was a speculator and a scoundrel and robber and thief, and I don't know what else."

"Q. He used very violent language to you?—A. Yes. He finally said it was blood, and the first blood they wanted was mine. There were some little dishes on the table, and he got hold of a spoon and said: 'You have no blood, you are a traitor to your people; your blood is frozen, and all the little blood you have will be there in five minutes,' putting the spoon up to my face and pointing to it."

Did he show much mercy when he condemned to death Nolin and Boyer when they refused to take up arms? On page 60 we read:

"Q. What was the chief event of that day as far as you can remember?—A. He was giving orders to go and take William Boyer and Charles Nolin prisoners."

"Q. Did you hear him say why they were to be taken prisoner?—A. Because they would not take up arms."

"Q. Did he say anything about because they had been movers up to that time?—A. Because they had been movers, and had left it at the time of taking up arms."

"Q. Was Nolin tried?—A. About his trial I cannot say exactly, I heard Riel saying he ought to be shot or that they should shoot him."

"Q. You understood Nolin and Boyer were to be shot?—A. Yes, both of them."

"Q. And because they would not join the movement in taking up arms?—A. In not taking up arms."

I was very much pleased the other evening, and think the country is to be congratulated upon the fact, that the hon. leader of the Opposition in the Province of Quebec expressed himself so very loyally as he did on that occasion. That hon. gentleman said that Tory loyalty was very much interested indeed, and stated that when Lord Elgin sanctioned the Indemnity Bill, the Tories became disloyal and signed an appeal for annexation to the United States. The hon. gentleman, no doubt, forgot to mention the fact that that very manifesto—which was signed by some Conservatives, I admit—was also signed by such men as the Hon. A. A. Dorion, the late Mr. Doutre, Mr. Papineau, Mr. Laflamme, Mr. Holton, and other leaders of the Liberal party in the Province of Quebec. No doubt, those who did not know the facts of the case would have been led to believe from the hon. gentleman's statement that this manifesto was signed only by Conservatives, and that not a single Liberal leader would have consented to put his name to it. But the hon. gentleman knows that that manifesto was not signed by Sir George Cartier, the leader of the Liberal-Conservative party in the Province of Quebec. In speaking of Sir George Cartier, the hon. gentleman was most eloquent, and expressed great admiration for the late lamented Sir George Etienne Cartier; but, Sir, when, unfortunately for the country, Sir George Cartier was removed from our midst, and from that career of usefulness which we Conservatives can never forget, and which we every day still recall with pleasure, the hon. gentleman must have forgotten that even then the Liberal press attacked the hon. gentleman fiercely, although now they claim him almost as one of their leaders. He must have forgotten the manner in which Liberals in this House and outside of this House outraged him during his life, although they now attempt to eulogise him, as the hon. gentleman did the other evening. If Sir George Cartier were still among us, I mean to say, and I believe it, that he would have acted exactly as we have acted in reference to the Riel matter. During his lifetime was he not treated exactly as we are treated to day? Did they not say that he was sold to the Orangemen? Did they not say that he sold the Province of Quebec to John A. and the Protestants of Ontario? Did they not say that he had sold his Province to English influence? Well, Sir, he loved his country sufficiently well to attach no more importance than he should have attached to such insults, which were levelled against him as they are levelled against us to-day. Sir George Cartier did his duty, and he left behind him a memory which, even after his death, has not been respected by the Liberals.

In the history of the late Mr. Letellier, written by a member of the Opposition, the hon. member for L'Islet (Mr. Casgrain), the memory of Sir George Cartier is outraged; and when the hon. member from Quebec East (Mr. Laurier) was speaking of Sir George Cartier in such eloquent terms, I could not help thinking of the sad page which I read in the book I have referred to. As far as I personally am concerned, and I believe I can say the same for my colleagues, we did, under the greatest difficulties and most painful cir-

cumstances, what we considered to be our duty, and I believe that what we did, Sir George Cartier, whose motto was what the motto of the Conservative party is, "*Prone et sans dol*," would have done under the same circumstances. I must apologise to you, Sir, and the House for having been so lengthy and imperfect in my remarks; but the matters which I treated I deemed it advisable to bring under the notice of the House, and I tried to do so in as concise a manner as possible.

